



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held February 6, 2008, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Antonovich made the following statement:

“Los Angeles County’s emergency rooms are increasingly crowded with patients suffering acute behavioral and substance abuse related illnesses. This is occurring at a time when hospitals and health care providers face a multitude of pressures, including a shrinking pool of clinicians, an aging, more chronically ill population, tighter regulations, and declining reimbursement. In order for providers to meet these challenges and continue to provide outstanding health care, it is essential to implement innovative solutions to overcome the growing demands.

“Tele-medicine is one such innovation that has helped many rural communities surmount their lack of resources. And now there is a growing demand for tele-medicine in urban settings. One of the most logical applications for tele-medicine in Los Angeles County would be the application of tele-psychiatry, which is a subset of tele-medicine that enhances a patient's access to mental health services from a psychiatrist or Tele-Psychiatry Program Funding February 6, 2008 physician via real-time live video conferencing. By utilizing tele-psychiatry, the Department of Mental Health can connect more mental health professionals to patients in the underserved areas of the County.”

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Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Antonovich, seconded by Supervisor Knabe, unanimously carried (Supervisor Yaroslavsky being absent), the Board directed the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Mental Health and the Chief Information Officer to:

1. Collaborate with the Hospital Association's Behavioral Health Services Committee on the following drafting policies and procedures that would facilitate the use of tele-psychiatry to provide prompt screening assessment and treatment in non-designated hospital emergency departments in underserved regions;
2. Explore the possible use of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds to establish a Tele-Psychiatry pilot project for Palmdale or Antelope Valley Mental Health Centers, urban areas and other underserved portions in the County; and
3. Report back to the Board in 30 days.

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Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Director of Mental Health
Chief Information Officer